

# Blessing

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**BLESS, BLESSING** —the act of declaring, or wishing, favor and goodness upon others. The blessing is not only the good effect of words; it also has the power to bring them to pass. In the Bible, important persons blessed those with less power or influence. The patriarchs pronounced benefits upon their children, often near their own deaths (Gen. 49:1-28). Even if spoken by mistake, once a blessing was given it could not be taken back (Gen. 27:33).

Leaders often blessed people, especially when getting ready to leave them. These included Moses (Deuteronomy 33), Joshua (22:6-7), and Jesus (Luke 24:50). Equals could bless each other by being friendly (Gen. 12:3). One can also bless God, showing gratitude to Him (Deut. 8:10) in songs of praise (Ps. 103:1-2).

God also blesses people by giving life, riches, fruitfulness, or plenty (Gen. 1:22, 28). His greatest blessing is turning us from evil (Acts 3:25-26) and forgiving our sins (Rom. 4:7-8).

Cases of the opposite of blessing, or cursing, are often cited in the Bible (Deut. 27:11-26). Although the natural reaction to a curse is to curse back, Christians are called to bless—to ask for the person's benefit (Matt. 5:44).

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Reference: Ronald F. Youngblood, general editor; F.F. Bruce and R.K. Harrison, consulting editors, *Nelson's new illustrated Bible dictionary: An authoritative one-volume reference work on the Bible with full color illustrations* [computer file], electronic edition of the revised edition of Nelson's illustrated Bible dictionary, Logos Library System, (Nashville: Thomas Nelson) 1997, c1995.